

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02

EB-07 /061 W

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R 151504Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 195

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 6698

AF/W FOR AMBASSADOR EASUM

E.O. 11652: NGDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI, US

SUBJECT: US- NIGERIA BILATERAL COMMISSION

REF: (A) LAGOS 6406 (B) STATE 122316 AND PREVIOUS

1. IN DISCUSSION JULY 14 BETWEEN DEPUTY DIRECTOR MEA'S AMERICA DEPARTMENT ACD POLITICAL COUNSELOR, SUBJECT BILATERAL COMMISSION INJECTED INTO CONVERSATION. DEPUTY DIRECTOR SAID HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT IDEA A GOOD ONE, THOUGH HE READILY ALLOWED THERE WOULD BE "PROBLEMS". OFFICIAL VOLUNTEERED THAT SUCH PRODPEMS OUGHT TO BE BROUGHT INTO OPENAND STUDIED TO SEE IF THEY COULD BE RESOLVED. HE THOUGHT SOME JOINT EFFORTS LOOK AT AMERICAN DIPLOMA-MILLS AND OTHER SUBSTANDARD OR FLY-BY-NIGHT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FACED BY NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN U.S. WOULD HAVE PARTICULAR MERIT.

2. COMMENT: DEPUTY DIRECTOR IS AMONG MEA OFFICIALS WHO CAN BE CONSIDERED FRIENDS OF U.S. BUT EVEN HE FORESAW SOME DIFFICULTIES. PROBLEMS TO WHICH HE ALLUDED CLEARLY REVOLVE AROUND QUESTION OF HOW CLOSE TO U.S. IS TOO CLOSE FOR FMG. MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND ITS CIVILIAN BUREAUCRACY ALWAYS KEEP AN EYE ON AFRICAN VIEWS, NOT WANTING TO GET OUT OF
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STEP WITH MAJORITY OPINION ON CONTINENT. THERE WOULD UN-

DOUBTEDLY BE SOME OPPOSITION WITHIN GOVERNMENT TO CLOSER COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES, PARTICULARLY AT PRESENT JUNCTURE WHEN EXPOSES OF CIA INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA AND THIRD WORLD KEEP APPEARING. AS EXAMPLES WE CITE RECENT STORIES ABOUT FBIS/KADUNA (LAGOS 6425) AND ALLEGATIONS CIA AGENTS WORKING FOR ASHLAND OIL, THE LATTER A STORY WHICH HIT NIGERIAN PRESS TODAY, JULY 15, (USIA 16519). IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, THOSE FAVORING CLOSER COOPERATION WITH U.S. MIGHT PREFER SOME MORE UNSTRUCTURED, AD HOC-TYPE DIALOGUE TO THE MORE FORMAL AND STRUCTURE BILATERAL COMMISSION. NEVERTHELESS CONTINUED PROBING MAY UNCOVER AREAS OF ACTIVITY WHERE NIGERIANS HAVE A PARTICULAR DESIRE OR LIVELY INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING CLOSER TIES WITH U.S. SUCH INSTANCES OUGHT TO BE EXPLOITED BOTH HERE AND BY DEPARTMENT IN DEALINGS WITH NIGERIAN EMBASSY BY POINTING OUT POTENTIAL BENEFITS BILATERAL COMMISSION WOULD HAVE IN THE PARTICULAR SITUATION. SLOWLY, WE MAY BE ABLE BUILD NIGERIAN CONSTITUENCY FOR THE IDEA OF BILATERAL COMMISSION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERVENTION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LAGOS06698
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750244-0593
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750756/aaaabxrx.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 LAGOS 6406, 75 STATE 122316
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <15 DEC 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US- NIGERIA BILATERAL COMMISSION
TAGS: PFOR, NI, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006